

# United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

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Decision Record  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-186-EA

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February, 2011

## Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail

***Location:*** Moab, Utah

***Applicant/Address:*** Trail Mix  
Grand County Non-motorized Trail Committee  
Grand County  
125 E. Center  
Moab, UT 84532

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Bureau of Land Management  
Moab Field Office  
82 East Dogwood  
Moab, Utah 84532  
Phone: 435-259-2100  
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**DECISION RECORD**  
**DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-0186-EA**  
**Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (EA # DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-0186) for the marking and construction of a new mountain bike single track trail (The Magnificent Seven) in the vicinity of Gemini Bridges. Three alternatives were analyzed for their environmental impacts.

It is my decision to approve Alternative C, which authorizes the construction and marking of six miles of new mountain bike singletrack. The approved mountain bike trail will be available for private, commercial and organized group use. See the Map of Alternative C in the above referenced EA for a map of the approved route. This EA is attached to this Decision Record.

**Authorities:** The authority for this decision is contained in CFR 43 8342-Designation of Areas and Trails.

**Compliance and Monitoring:** No monitoring is required for bighorn sheep because the route does not pass through bighorn sheep crucial habitat. The BLM will ensure that the proponent follows the terms, conditions and stipulations that are outlined below.

**Terms / Conditions / Stipulations:** The proponent commits to the following terms and conditions in the construction and marking of the approved designated mountain bike trail.

- 1) Proper construction techniques, such as rock armoring and lining, will be used to decrease the impacts on soils along the trail.
- 2) Vegetation will be avoided to the extent possible during trail construction.
- 3) Areas in the vicinity of archaeological sites will be brushed and/or fenced to ensure that errant mountain bike travel does not affect sites.
- 4) Singletrack use may be disallowed on a limited portion of the new single track if a raptor nest is in use within a certain specified distance from the nest (time and distance varies by species). A portion of singletrack could be signed as closed for the duration of the nesting period and the route will be rerouted onto a nearby-designated road for the duration of the nesting.
- 5) The Portal Trail will be armored and repaired in order to withstand the anticipated additional mountain bike use.
- 6) The designated route will be marked and maintained to keep it safe, apparent and non-motorized.
- 7) The proponent commits to following the rules regarding fugitive dust at [www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r307/r307.htm](http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r307/r307.htm)

## **PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY:**

Alternative C has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the 2008 Moab BLM Resource Management Plan, which states “design and implement up to 150 new miles of managed mechanized (mountain bike) trails” (TRV-17, page 128). It is further in conformance with the wildlife decision stating : To protect lambing, rutting and migration habitat (101,897 acres), apply a no surface occupancy stipulation for oil and gas leasing and preclude other surface disturbing activities (WL-36, page 141). Alternative A is in conformance with the Travel Management decision, but is not in complete conformance with the Wildlife decision.

The proposed action (Alternative A) and the alternative (Alternative C) are consistent with the Grand County General Plan (April 2004, pages 48-50), which calls for “promoting management of public lands for benefit and enjoyment of the people of Grand County and the nation”. The Grand County General Plan recognizes that “the public lands of Grand County are the foundation of the county’s economic prosperity” because of the reliance of Grand County on tourist revenue. Grand County’s plan calls for the designation of official trails, and for reducing user group conflicts, “particularly where high impact users prevent low impact users from their legitimate use and enjoyment of the public lands.”

In addition, the proposed trails are shown on the Grand County Non-Motorized Trails Master Plan, which was adopted by the Grand County Council and the City of Moab in 2008.

**Alternatives Considered:** Alternative A, which adds an additional 1.3 miles of singletrack route in the upper reaches of Gold Bar Rim was also considered. This alternative would have added more singletrack opportunities, thus meeting the purpose and need for the project.

**Rationale for Decision:** Alternative A was not selected because the upper 1.3 miles of the Gold Bar Singletrack Route traversed desert bighorn sheep migration habitat. The 2008 Moab RMP recognized the importance of this habitat, managing it as no surface occupancy for surface disturbing activities. Choosing Alternative A could compromise that habitat, making it more difficult for migrating rams to locate ewes. Mountain biking activity in the migration corridor could cause bighorn to take flight and avoid utilizing the corridor near the trail. Corridor abandonment by breeding rams could directly impede rutting patterns. This could result in reduced breeding success in certain ewe groups if rams fail to migrate into these territories during the rut. The addition of this portion of the proposed mountain bike trail could further fragment desert bighorn sheep habitat and could impact the migration and breeding success of bighorn sheep.

Alternative C was selected because it conforms to the 2008 Moab RMP. The six new miles of trail do not cross desert bighorn sheep habitat; there would be no new disturbance to the sheep by either the construction of the trail or in the introduction of more use. While Alternative C does not completely fulfill the needs of the proponent, it does offer six new miles of singletrack, and composes the majority of the hoped-for “epic ride”. It removes the bikes from the busy Gemini Bridges road, and removes them from a portion of the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Route.

The public was notified of the proposed action by posting on the Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) on June 3, 2010. Four meetings open to the public were held by Trail Mix, a county-sponsored committee; the trail proposal was extensively discussed at these meetings. Twenty scoping comments were received. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

raised the issue of citizens' wilderness in the vicinity of a portion of the trail. However, the BLM's assessment of the area did not find it to possess wilderness characteristics. Other scoping commentors raised issues of economic contribution as well as the need for more singletrack biking opportunities in the Moab area.

A thirty day public comment period was held on the EA from November 24 to December 29, 2010. Ninety comments were received. The comments and the BLM's response are summarized in Chapter 5 of the EA.

**Protest/Appeal Language:**

The decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. Public notification of this decision will be considered to have occurred on February 2, 2011. Within 30 days of this decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at Moab Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 82 East Dogwood, Moab, Utah 84532. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.


If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b)), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
3. The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted, and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the Authorized Officer.

A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 6201 Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84138-1180, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the Authorized Officer and/or IBLA.

  
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Authorized Officer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Attachments:** EA # DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-0186, which includes a map of the chosen alternative and response to comments

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Finding of No Significant Impact  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-186-EA**

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**February, 2011**

**Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail**

***Location:***     ***Moab, Utah***

***Applicant/Address:***   **Trail Mix  
Grand County Non-motorized Trail Committee  
Grand County  
125 E. Center  
Moab, UT 84532**

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
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# **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **Environmental Assessment DOI BLM UT Y010 2010 0186 *Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail***

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI BLM UT Y010 2010 0186) for a proposed action to address the lack of singletrack mountain bike trails in the Gemini Bridges area in Grand County. The project would add six miles of designated singletrack mountain bike trail as described in Alternative C of the EA referenced above. The underlying need for the proposal would be met while accomplishing the following objectives:

1. The proposed non-motorized routes would provide connectivity for bicyclists between Highway 313 and Highway 279. By providing bicycle only routes between these two highways, the BLM could provide a challenging "epic ride" for mountain bicyclists. In addition, singletrack bike riding is an opportunity that is rare in the Moab area.
2. Designation of the trail would offer mountain bikers a secluded single-track experience in a visually attractive area. This recreation experience differs greatly from that found by bicycling a heavily used and maintained road (Gemini Bridges), and a highly eroded jeep route (Gold Bar Rim). Providing positive, safe, healthful and rewarding mountain bike experiences is beneficial to that economic sector of Moab that is dependent on mountain bike tourism. In addition, the trail would provide an opportunity for outdoor experiences.
3. Non-motorized users would be removed from the busy and dusty Gemini Bridges Road for approximately 5 miles, and from the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari Route for approximately 1.5 miles. The Gemini Bridges road receives so much motorized traffic travelling at high rates of speed that it is unsafe for mountain bike use during busy periods. The Gold Bar Rim road has suffered extreme erosion which makes biking unpalatable; with the adoption of Alternative C, bicyclists will be on the Gold Bar Rim route for a shorter period of time.

The Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail project area generally parallels the Gemini Bridges and Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari routes. EA#DOI BLM UT Y010 2010 0186 is attached, and is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A no action alternative and two action alternatives were analyzed in the EA.

### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the 2008 Moab RMP/FEIS. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

**Context:** The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately six linear miles of singletrack mountain bike trail on BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

**Intensity:** The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** Alternative C would impact resources as described in the EA. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to bighorn sheep were incorporated in the design of the action alternatives, as the route was altered to accommodate bighorn habitat. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the 2008 Moab RMP/FEIS. Beneficial impacts to mountain bike users and to the local economy are analyzed within the EA.
2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** Alternative C removes bicyclists from the busy Gemini Bridges road, enhancing the bicycling public's safety.
3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** The historic and cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and potential impacts mitigated in the design of Alternative C. The trail was relocated to avoid all cultural sites. The following components of the Human Environment and Resource Issues are not affected because they are not present in the project area: Wetlands, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic rivers, BLM natural Areas, Wilderness/WSA, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Environmental Justice, Wastes, Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species. In addition, the following components of the Human Environment and Resource Issues, although present, would not be affected by this proposed action for the reasons listed in Appendix A of the EA: Air Quality, Floodplains, Water Resources, visual Resources, Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns, Migratory Birds, Utah BLM Sensitive Species, Invasive Species, and Woodland. Seven components (Soils, Recreation, Socioeconomics, T&E Animals, Wildlife, Livestock Grazing and Vegetation) of the Human Environment and Resource Issues were analyzed in detail in Chapter 4. None of these would be significantly impacted because:
  - a) Soils would be protected by requiring mitigating measures in the construction of the trail to minimize erosion
  - b) Recreation would be enhanced by providing a singletrack mountain biking opportunities
  - c) Socioeconomics would be enhanced by providing an additional opportunity for a segment of the recreating public



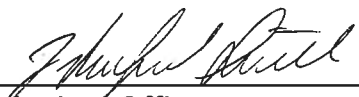
- d) T&E Animals (Mexican Spotted Owl) would not be impacted because there is no occupancy of the Bull Canyon. In addition, the trail was moved from the rim of Bull Canyon, which is beneficial to possible re-occupation of this canyon by owls.
  - e) Wildlife (Bighorn Sheep) would not be impacted because the chosen trail alternative does not cross important bighorn habitat.
  - f) Livestock Grazing would not be impacted because, although the area is in a grazing allotment, the season of use does not coincide with the heavy recreation use season.
  - g) Vegetation would not be impacted because as few plants as possible would be removed for the trail construction.
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 4 of the EA.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 4 of the EA.
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory has been completed for the proposed action, and no cultural resources were found.



9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.** Though much of the proposed trail passes through some type of potential Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO) habitat, only one segment of the trail, the Bull Canyon segment, is located in an area that has been deemed suitable for MSO occupancy. This segment of the trail traverses approximately 2.7 miles of suitable MSO habitats not known to be occupied by MSOs in the past or currently. USFWS protocol MSO surveys have been completed in this area in 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2010. This portion of the trail is parallel and within less than a half mile of the highly used Gemini Bridges road and mostly utilizes a two-track road designated for motorized use. Approximately 0.7 miles of new trail would be established along Bull Canyon in suitable foraging habitat; of which 0.5 miles is located on Utah State lands adjacent to Crips Hole (unsuitable habitat). This portion of the trail is also less than 0.5 miles from the Gemini Bridges Road. The development and use of the new single tracks would have, at most, minimal impacts to MSO habitats, due to the relatively limited suitable habitat this portion of new trail would occupy, the lack of known use in this area by MSOs and the high level of recreational use currently established in this area.

Consultation has been completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service concurs that the Bull Run portion of the trail would have minimal impacts to MSO habitats and MSO populations or individuals. This is due to a lack of occupancy, the use of the motorized roads through most of the trail system and the relatively small size of the area impacted by the establishment of new trails.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.** The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Officer

7/1/11  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

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Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-186-EA

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January 2011

## Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail

**Location:** *Moab, Utah*

**Applicant/Address:** Trail Mix  
Grand County Non-motorized Trail Committee  
Grand County  
125 E. Center  
Moab, UT 84532

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**Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2010-186-EA**

## **1.0 PURPOSE & NEED**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of the marking and constructing the “Magnificent Seven” Mountain Bike Trail as proposed by Trail Mix, the Grand County (Utah) non-motorized trail committee. The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action. The EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any “significant” impacts could result from the analyzed actions. “Significance” is defined by NEPA and is found in regulation 40 CFR 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a statement of “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). If the decision maker determines that this project has “significant” impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record may be signed for the EA approving the selected alternative, whether the proposed action or another alternative. A Decision Record (DR), including a FONSI statement, documents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in “significant” environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in the Moab Resource Management Plan (2008 RMP), signed October 31, 2008.

### **1.2 Background**

Trail Mix proposes to mark four mountain-bike only singletrack trails in the Gemini Bridges area. These trails total 7.2 miles in length, and generally parallel motorized roads that were designated in the 2008 RMP. The trail proposals can be broken into four segments. See Map of Alternative A for a depiction of these proposed trails.

- 1) **Bull Run Connector:** approximately 0.2 mile in length connecting a designated road paralleling the Gemini Bridges Road and the rim of Bull Canyon. The proposed trail is 50% on slickrock. The Bull Run Trail in its entirety starts on SITLA land, connects to a designated road on BLM land and follows this designated road through BLM land. The Bull Run Connector connects this road to a singletrack trail on another SITLA section. Once the singletrack trail leaves SITLA, it continues onto BLM land for approximately one mile before rejoining the Gemini Bridges Road.
- 2) **Arth’s Corner Trail:** 1.5 miles in length paralleling the Gemini Bridges Road. The proposed trail is 60% on slickrock.
- 3) **Little Canyon Singletrack:** 2.0 miles in length joining Arth’s Corner Trail with the Gold Bar Rim area. The proposed trail is 50% on slickrock.

- 4) Gold Bar Singletrack: 2.45 miles in length paralleling the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari Route. The route utilizes a small section of designated road in between the two sections of singletrack. The proposed trail is 95% on slickrock.

When combined with the already-designated Golden Spike, Poison Spider and Portal routes, the proposed trails comprise the Magnificent Seven Bike Route. These trails would provide about 9 miles of non-motorized singletrack connectivity on both SITLA and BLM lands between Highway 313 and Highway 279.

### **1.3 Need for the Proposed Action**

The need for the proposed action is three-fold:

1. The proposed non-motorized routes would provide connectivity for bicyclists between Highway 313 and Highway 279. By providing bicycle only routes between these two highways, the BLM could provide a challenging “epic ride” for mountain bicyclists. In addition, singletrack bike riding is an opportunity that is rare in the Moab area.
2. Designation of the four trails would offer mountain bikers a secluded single-track experience in a visually attractive area. This recreation experience differs greatly from that found by bicycling a heavily used and maintained road (Gemini Bridges), and a highly eroded jeep route (Gold Bar Rim). Providing positive, safe, healthful and rewarding mountain bike experiences is beneficial to that economic sector of Moab that is dependent on mountain bike tourism. In addition, the trail would provide an opportunity for outdoor experiences.
3. Non-motorized users would be removed from the busy and dusty Gemini Bridges Road for approximately 5 miles, and from the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari Route for approximately 3 miles. The Gemini Bridges road receives so much motorized traffic travelling at high rates of speed that it is unsafe for mountain bike use during busy periods. While vehicles on the Gold Bar Rim road are going at a slower rate of speed, mixing bicycles with highly modified four wheel drive buggies presents an unsafe situation. The Gold Bar Rim road has suffered extreme erosion which makes biking unpalatable.

### **1.4 Purpose(s) of the Proposed Action**

The BLM is considering the trail proposal to improve the recreational mountain biking opportunities available in Moab as well as to meet the 2008 RMP’s goal of adding singletrack mountain-bike only trails to the travel management system.

### **1.5 Conformance with BLM Land Use Plan(s)**

The proposed action is in conformance with the 2008 RMP, which states “design and implement up to 150 new miles of managed mechanized (mountain bike) trails” (TRV-17, page 128).

However, a portion of the proposed action does not conform to a 2008 RMP decision concerning desert bighorn sheep habitat. That decision is WL-36 (page 141), which states: “to protect lambing, rutting, and migration habitat (101,897 acres), apply a no surface occupancy stipulation for oil and gas leasing and preclude other surfacing disturbing activities.”

### **1.6 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans**

The proposed action is consistent with the Grand County General Plan (April 2004, pages 48-50), which calls for “promoting management of public lands for benefit and enjoyment of the people of Grand County and the nation”. The Grand County General Plan recognizes that “the public lands of Grand County are the foundation of the county’s economic prosperity” because of the reliance of Grand County on tourist revenue. Grand County’s plan calls for the designation of official trails, and for reducing user group conflicts, “particularly where high impact users prevent low impact users from their legitimate use and enjoyment of the public lands.”

In addition, the proposed trails are shown on the Grand County Non-Motorized Trails Master Plan, which was adopted by the Grand County Council and the City of Moab in 2008.

### **1.7 Identification of Issues**

Trail Mix has announced the proposed action and its request to the BLM for approval of the Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail at several of its monthly public meetings, including the meetings of April 13, May 11, July 13, 2010 and August 9, 2010. The proposed action was posted on the BLM’s Environmental Notification Bulletin Board on June 3, 2010. The issues raised by the public include 1) the presence of a portion of the proposed trail in critical desert bighorn sheep habitat, 2) the presence of a portion of the proposed trail in an area proposed for wilderness by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and 3) the economic need for new bike trails to energize the Moab economy.

The Interdisciplinary Team Checklist contains a checklist of all resources and issues considered by BLM staff. This checklist is attached as Appendix A. Those issues that are relevant to the proposed action are: Soils, Recreation, Socioeconomics, Cultural Resources, Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species (Mexican Spotted Owl), Fish and Wildlife (desert bighorn sheep), Livestock Grazing, and Vegetation. The issues are:

#### **1.7.1 Fish and Wildlife**

- What impacts would the addition of the trail have on the desert bighorn sheep and the critical habitat that has been identified on portions of the proposed trail?
- What impacts would the addition of the trail have on nesting raptors?

#### **1.7.2 Socioeconomics**

- What would be the economic impacts to Grand County of adding the Magnificent Seven Trail System to the available mountain biking opportunities?

#### **1.7.3 Recreation**

- How would the proposed action provide a recreational opportunity for the mountain bike community?

#### **1.7.4 Vegetation and Soils**

- How much trail design and construction is needed to reduce soil erosion on steeper slopes?
- How much impact to vegetation would there be with the construction of the proposed trail?

### **1.8 Issues Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis**

#### Cultural Resources

A Class III cultural resource inventory was conducted for the proposed Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail prior to on-the-ground project work (Moab FO Inventory Number U-10-BL-0744bs) by a BLM Archaeologist. One existing and five new cultural sites were located in the vicinity of the proposed project. All sites are considered potentially eligible to the National Register. If bicycle use follows the proposed route, and minimal natural barriers are placed along certain sections of the trail, no sites will be further impacted. Therefore, the Bureau of Land Management has determined a finding of “**no historic properties affected**” is appropriate for this project.

#### Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing was identified as an issue that has been considered, but eliminated from further analysis. Although the proposed action is within a grazing allotment, there will be no impact to that allotment from the addition of a bicycle trail.

#### Externally Proposed Wilderness

On July 15, 2010, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance presented its scoping comments to the BLM concerning the trail proposal. SUWA pointed out that the Gold Bar Singletrack portion of the Magnificent Seven Trail is within the area proposed for wilderness (the Gold Bar Canyon unit) in America’s Red Rock Wilderness bill. SUWA requested that this portion of the trail be omitted from consideration.

In the BLM’s Utah Wilderness Inventory (1999), some portions of the Gold Bar Canyon unit were determined to possess wilderness characteristics. However, that portion of the Gold Bar Canyon unit that the trail traverses was found to lack wilderness characteristics. That finding was reaffirmed in the review of wilderness characteristics that accompanied the 2008 RMP. See Chapter 4 of the *Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* of the 2008 RMP for a discussion of the impacts upon wilderness characteristics. Additionally, a field check undertaken by



the BLM Interdisciplinary Team on June 10, 2010 reconfirmed that the portion of the Gold Bar unit containing the proposed bike trail lacked wilderness characteristics.

#### Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species

Though much of the proposed trail passes through some type of potential Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO) habitat, only one segment of the trail, the Bull Canyon segment, is located in an area that has been deemed suitable for MSO occupancy. This segment of the trail traverses approximately 2.7 miles of suitable MSO habitats not known to be occupied by MSOs in the past or currently. USFWS protocol MSO surveys have been completed in this area in 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2010. This portion of the trail is parallel and within less than a half mile of the highly used Gemini Bridges road and mostly utilizes a two-track road designated for motorized use. Approximately 0.7 miles of new trail would be established along Bull Canyon in suitable foraging habitat; of which 0.5 miles is located on Utah State lands adjacent to Crips Hole (unsuitable habitat). This portion of the trail is also less than 0.5 miles from the Gemini Bridges Road. The development and use of the new single tracks would have, at most, minimal impacts to MSO habitats, due to the relatively limited suitable habitat this portion of new trail would occupy, the lack of known use in this area by MSOs and the high level of recreational use currently established in this area.

Consultation has been completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service concurs that the Bull Run portion of the trail (proposed in both Alternatives A and C) would have minimal impacts to MSO habitats and MSO populations or individuals. This is due to a lack of occupancy, the use of the motorized roads through most of the trail system and the relatively small size of the area impacted by the establishment of new trails. Due to these factors, impacts to Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species from the two proposed actions and the no action alternative will not be further analyzed in this document.

#### Fugitive Dust

On June 24, 2010, the BLM received a letter from the Utah Public Lands Policy Coordination Director stating that the proposed project is subject to R307-205-5: Fugitive Dust, of the Utah Air Quality Rules, due to the fugitive dust that may be generated during soil disturbance for the project. These rules apply construction activities that disturb an area greater than 0.25 acre in size. A permit is not required from the Executive Secretary of the Air Quality Board, but steps need to be taken to minimize fugitive dust. Trail Mix commits to following the rules regarding fugitive dust at [www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r307/r307.htm](http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r307/r307.htm). Since the proponent commits to following these rules, the impacts of fugitive dust from the two proposed actions and the no action alternative will not be further analyzed in this document.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has presented the purpose and need of the proposed project, as well as the relevant issues, i.e., those elements of the human environment that could be affected by the implementation of the proposed project. In order to meet the purpose and need of the proposed project in a way that resolves the issues, the BLM has considered and/or developed a range of action alternatives. These alternatives are presented in Chapter 2.

The potential environmental impacts or consequences resulting from the implementation of each alternative considered in detail are analyzed in Chapter 4 for each of the identified issues.

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING PROPOSED ACTION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Three alternatives are presented for analysis. Alternative A is the trail alignment as proposed by Trail Mix. Alternative B (No Action) provides comparison for the action alternatives. Alternative C excludes approximately 1 mile of the Gold Bar Rim Singletrack to avoid crossing desert bighorn migration routes. Cyclists would be required to ride on the designated Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari Route in order to reach Gold Bar Rim. The Bull Run Connector, Arth's Corner and the Little Canyon Singletrack are identical to that proposed in Alternative A.

### **2.2 Alternative A (Proponent Proposed Action)**

Trail Mix, Grand County's non-motorized trail committee, has proposed the Magnificent Seven mountain bike trail as an additional mountain bike opportunity in the Moab area. This mountain bike trail would be available for private mountain bikers, as well as for commercial and organized group use. Trail Mix commits to marking and constructing the trail, including signage sufficient to making the trail understandable and safe. Trail Mix commits to following all state laws concerning fugitive dust. Trail Mix commits to building barriers to separate trail sections from nearby archaeological sites. There are four portions of the trail that would be new additions to the mountain bike routes designated in the 2008 Moab RMP:

- 1) Bull Run Connector: 1.24 miles total, of which less than one-quarter mile connects a designated road paralleling the Gemini Bridges Road and SITLA lands on the rim of Bull Canyon. When the singletrack reemerges from SITLA lands, it continues for about one mile as a singletrack on BLM lands.
- 2) Arth's Corner Trail: 1.5 miles in length paralleling the Gemini Bridges Road.
- 3) Little Canyon Singletrack: 2.0 miles in length joining the Gemini Bridges road area with the Gold Bar Rim road area.
- 4) Gold Bar Singletrack: 2.45 miles in length, roughly paralleling the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari Route. The singletrack is in two portions, joined by a designated road at approximately the midpoint.

The total length of new singletrack in Alternative A is 7.2 miles. These routes provide a variety of riding opportunities. See Map of Alternative A for the delineation of the proposed route segments.

### **2.3 Alternative B (No Action)**

The No Action Alternative would deny the new mountain bike trail as a route designated in the Moab Travel Plan. No miles of new singletrack would be marked. All bikes would be required to stay on the roads designated in the 2008 RMP. Analysis of this

alternative provides important baseline information for the decision maker and for the public.

#### **2.4 Alternative C (Bighorn Sheep Alternative)**

Alternative C is identical to Alternative A for trail segments 1-3. Alternative C removes that portion of the Gold Bar Singletrack trail (part of segment 4) that is in an area managed to preclude all surface disturbing activities in order to protect desert bighorn sheep lambing, rutting, and migration habitat. The total length of new singletrack in Alternative C is 6.0 miles. See Map of Alternative C for a delineation of the proposed route segments in Alternative C.

### **3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the potentially affected existing environment (i.e., the physical, biological, social, and economic values and resources) of the impact area as identified in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist found in Appendix A and presented in Chapter 1 of this assessment. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts described in Chapter 4.

#### **3.2 General Setting**

The proposed trail is in the Gemini Bridges area, a heavily visited portion of the Labyrinth Rim/Gemini Bridges Special Recreation Management Area. Visitors use vehicles, motorcycles, ATVs and mountain bikes to tour the area, which affords long range views of Colorado Plateau country, as well as opportunities to visit natural rock openings such as Gemini Bridges. The area is characterized by slickrock, sparse vegetation and thin soils. Historical uses include grazing, mineral exploration, and recreation.

#### **3.3 Resources Brought Forward for Analysis**

The following resources are brought forward for analysis in this Environmental Assessment.

##### **3.3.1 Fish and Wildlife**

Much of this proposed trail system traverses through areas that have the potential to be chosen by a raptor for a nest site. Currently there are no known active nesting sites near any of the proposed new single track trails or portions of designated roads identified for use on this trail system.

The entire trail system traverses through desert bighorn sheep habitat occupied by the Potash Bighorn Sheep Herd. The Potash Bighorn Sheep Herd and the adjacent Island in the Sky Herd are the only remaining native self-supporting desert bighorn sheep herds in Utah. Either other desert bighorn herds in Utah have been reintroduced into historical ranges that they had once occupied or they do not support numbers large enough to be considered viable populations. The Potash Bighorn Sheep Herd has remained healthy and disease-free and is expanding

both its range and its population size. The herd is used as a source for reestablishing bighorn populations in other historically occupied ranges throughout the west.

The desert bighorn sheep is a major wildlife species in this area. Within the Moab Field Office, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) recognizes approximately 305,000 acres of habitat for the Potash herd; the Division estimates that approximately 250 desert bighorn sheep inhabit this area. Several recent GPS collar studies (2003-2010) as well as modeling exercises have determined these sheep consistently utilize approximately 130,000 acres within this range. Ewes especially utilize very specific areas that are crucial to lambing and rearing of their young. These rearing areas generally consist of steep talus slopes along canyons bottoms and/or along rims in more remote areas where ewes can forage and rear their young. Steep talus slopes typically offer escape terrain to which animals can flee, avoiding human disturbances, livestock conflicts and predators.

The majority of the 130,000 acres determined as the most valuable bighorn habitats (that offering lambing, rearing and migration routes) have protective stipulations measures in place that preclude activities that could degrade this important habitat. Two portions of the proposed trail are located in or across these important migration and lambing habitats protected in the 2008 RMP from new disturbances. The Bull Run connector (0.2 miles only) and approximately 1.3 miles of the Gold Bar Singletrack are within protected habitat for desert bighorn sheep. These areas are managed as No Surface Occupancy for all surface disturbing activities (2008 RMP) because of the importance of this habitat.

### **3.3.2 Socioeconomics**

The economy of Moab and Grand County is highly dependent upon tourism, with over 60% of the economy directly dependent upon that sector. A large part of the recreation economy depends on motorized and non-motorized touring, including both four wheeling and mountain biking. Moab has five bike shops, as well as 25 bike tour companies, all of which depend on the existence of mountain bike trails on public lands. In addition, tourists who come to Moab to enjoy mountain biking contribute to the economy through purchase of food and lodging.

### **3.3.3 Recreation**

Recreation use in the area of the proposed trail is high. In 2006, traffic counter data showed that 38,000 vehicles crossed the Gemini Bridges entrance road at Highway 191. Assuming 2.5 people per vehicle, and assuming that 50% of these vehicles exited to Highway 191, 72,500 people entering at Highway 191 recreated on the Gemini Bridges Road. In addition, visitors also approach the Gemini Bridges road from Highway 313. Some of these visitors exit at Highway 191 and would be included in the traffic count at that location. However, some

of these visitors exit the way they came (Highway 313), and are not included in the Gemini/Highway 191 traffic count. It is assumed that recreation visitation in the Gemini Bridges area approaches 100,000 visitors per year.

Many types of motorized vehicle drivers use the roads in the area, including jeeps, trucks, ATVs and motorcycles. Two Jeep Safari routes (Metal Masher and Gold Bar Rim) are found in the area. Bicycle use on the Gemini Bridges road has diminished in recent years, although bike use remains high. Many private individuals, as well as commercial tour companies, visit Gemini Bridges as a focal point of a day tour. The Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari Route is a popular route with those whose vehicles are outfitted for very rugged roads. Other recreation uses in the area include climbing and camping.

The Gold Bar Rim Singletrack trail has been in use by cyclists at least since 1991 (it appears in a mountain bike guide book published in that year). It was not inventoried at the time of the 2008 RMP and not brought forward as a route for consideration. Consequently, it was not designated in the Travel Plan accompanying the 2008 RMP.

#### **3.3.4 Vegetation and Soils**

Vegetation and soils in the area of the proposed trail are both sparse. Much of the proposed trail is on slickrock, varying from 50% on the Little Canyon Rim portion to around 95% on the Gold Bar Singletrack portion. Vegetation in the area consists of desert scrub types.

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The impacts of the three alternatives to the resources listed above are detailed in this chapter.

### **4.2 General Analysis Assumptions and Guidelines**

It is assumed that the marking and construction of the Magnificent Seven mountain bike trail will lead to an increase in mountain bike use on that trail.

### **4.3 Direct and Indirect Impacts**

Direct effects are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect effects are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.

#### **4.3.1 Alternative A – (Proponent Proposed Action)**

##### **4.3.1.4 Fish and Wildlife**

Raptors: Much of this trail system traverses through areas that have the potential to be chosen by a raptor for a nest site. If it is determined that there is an active nest within 0.5 miles of a portion of any of the proposed new single track trails, the BLM may implement the USFWS Guidelines

for Raptor Protection. This would mean that a portion of the single track use area may be signed as closed for the duration of the nesting period or until the chicks have fledged the nest. These stipulations would lessen the impacts to nesting raptors in the back country and would not apply to mountain bike use on designated roads.

Bighorn sheep: The Bull Run connector (0.2 miles only) is at the very edge of an area that is managed to preclude surface disturbing activities to benefit desert bighorn sheep. These 0.2 miles of trail connector would join a designated road on BLM to the singletrack trail that is on a fairly highly developed SITLA section. This SITLA section has a private residence and a Boy Scout overnight camp. The 0.2 miles of trail on BLM would minimally impact desert bighorn sheep because it is on the edge of the habitat area, and because it is near an area of development on SITLA lands.

The northern portion (approximately 1.3 miles) of the Gold Bar Rim Singletrack traverses migration habitat for desert bighorn sheep and occupied lambing grounds can be found approximately 0.5 miles to the northwest in Little Canyon. About a mile of that northern portion is on a road designated for travel in the 2008 RMP. Detailed impacts of the Travel Plan on desert bighorn sheep are in the EIS accompanying the 2008 RMP. The part of the proposed trail that is not on the Travel Plan is about a mile in length, and crosses the migration habitat that is managed to preclude surface disturbing activities.

The northern portion of the Gold Bar Rim Single-track route (1.3 miles) within desert bighorn sheep migration corridors has not been previously analyzed. Small groups of rams typically utilize these migration corridors. This area is also known to be utilized before, during and after the rut by rams traveling to and from their rutting grounds. The rut is usually early October through mid-December, when mountain biking is also very popular. These corridors are also utilized throughout the year by younger animals and ewes moving to other habitats. Ewes with their lambs may also use this portion of the trail, as there is an active lambing ground nearby.

Mountain biking activity in migration corridors could cause bighorn to take flight and avoid utilizing corridors near the trail. Local bighorn utilizing areas seasonally or yearlong near the proposed trail may experience localized disturbance from these activities and may abandon this portion of their habitat. Escape terrain in the area is plentiful and bighorn can readily avoid disturbances along the trail, though excessive escape behavior increases stress levels which leads to greater susceptibility to predation, parasite loads and disease. Typically, these areas do not offer high value lambing grounds, so it is not expected that

the additional stress from flight and avoidance behaviors would be elevated to a point where lamb survival is negatively impacted, but corridor abandonment by breeding rams could directly impede rutting pattern. This could result in reduced breeding success in certain ewe groups if rams fail to migrate into these territories during the rut. The addition of this mountain bike trail to the Travel Plan would therefore further fragment desert bighorn sheep habitat and could impact the migration and breeding success of bighorn sheep.

#### **4.3.1.2 Socioeconomics**

The Moab and Grand County economy is largely dependent upon tourism. Mountain bikers are an unknown, but fairly large, component of the tourist economy. The provision of a new, “epic”, largely singletrack mountain bike trail would enhance economic opportunities for businesses that depend upon this sector. In addition, mountain bikers buy food and lodging locally and additional mountain bikers (or mountain bikers who stay an additional day to ride any one trail) provide an unknown (due to the lack of data) but positive economic impact to Grand County.

#### **4.3.1.3 Recreation**

Constructing and marking 7.2 miles of mountain bike singletrack trail would provide a positive impact to recreationists seeking bicycle opportunities in the Moab area. The trail would enable bicyclists to have a mainly downhill run from Highway 313 to Highway 279 adjacent to the Colorado River. This would provide a mountain biking opportunity that is largely unavailable on BLM lands in the Moab area.

Construction of the trail would provide a non-motorized alternative to the Gemini Bridges and Gold Bar Rim motorized vehicle routes, thus increasing safety. Motorized vehicles on the Gemini Bridges road travel at speeds that are not compatible with the slower speeds of family bicyclists. Additionally, the dust raised by the fast moving vehicles is an impact upon bicyclists. The first three trail segments enable cyclists to avoid the Gemini Bridges road.

Although vehicles on the Gold Bar Rim route move at slower speeds, the route itself is highly eroded, with many ledges that are not rideable by bicyclists. The Gold Bar Singletrack would enable bicyclists to avoid these ledges.

The marking of the Magnificent Seven Trail would mean that additional mountain bikers would ride the Portal Trail to access Highway 279. This trail is primarily a hiking trail, although it is open to mountain bikers. The rock portions of the Portal Trail are suitable for bike riding;



currently, the dirt portions of the Portal Trail are eroding and entrenching. The Magnificent Seven Trail could exacerbate this problem.

#### **4.3.1.4 Vegetation and Soils**

Constructing and marking 7.2 miles of mountain bike singletrack trail would impact soils and vegetation along the trail. Given that 50% of the trail surface is slickrock, impacts to soils and vegetation would be lessened. However, a certain number of plants would be destroyed and soils could be compacted along the trail.

#### **4.3.1.6 Mitigation Measures**

Proper construction techniques, such as contouring, rock armoring and lining, would be used to decrease the impacts on soils along the trail.

Vegetation would be avoided to the extent possible during trail construction.

Singletrack use may be disallowed on a limited portion of the new single track if a raptor nest is in use within a certain specified distance from the nest (time and distance varies by species). A portion of singletrack could be signed as closed for the duration of the nesting period and the route would be rerouted onto a nearby-designated road for the duration of the nesting.

The Portal Trail would be armored and repaired in order to withstand additional mountain bike use.

#### **4.3.1.7 Monitoring and/or Compliance**

The existence of the northern Gold Bar Singletrack portion of the trail in desert bighorn sheep migration habitat should be monitored to assess its impact upon sheep. BLM wildlife staff would conduct the monitoring. If that portion of the trail were found to be causing adverse impact, that portion of the trail would be closed, and mountain bike traffic would be diverted to the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari route.

### **4.3.2. Alternative B – No Action**

#### **4.3.2.1 Fish and Wildlife**

There would be no fragmentation of desert bighorn sheep habitat or potential disturbance to nesting raptors as the trail would not be marked.

#### **4.3.2.2 Socioeconomics**

An unknown but positive addition to the Grand County economy would not be realized by the addition of a premier mountain bike trail.

#### **4.3.2.3 Recreation**

A quality recreation opportunity would not be provided. The chance to go on a mainly downhill run on a singletrack trail would be foregone. Cyclists would be forced to share the road with fast moving and dusty

vehicles on the Gemini Bridges Road. Cyclists would be forced to negotiate the ledges on the Gold Bar Rim Jeep Safari route. Many cyclists would be displaced because they chose not to ride on these roads. The Portal Trail would not receive additional mountain bike use, leading to its increased erosion.

#### **4.3.2.4 Vegetation and Soils**

Vegetation and soils would not be disturbed because the trail would not be marked and constructed.

### **4.3.3 Alternative C –Bighorn Sheep Alternative**

#### **4.3.3.4 Fish and Wildlife**

Raptors: The impacts to raptors would be the same as in Alternative A.

Bighorn sheep: The Bull Run connector (0.2 miles only) is at the very edge of an area that is managed to preclude surface disturbing activities to benefit desert bighorn sheep. This 0.2 mile of trail connector would join a designated road on BLM to the singletrack trail that is on a fairly highly developed SITLA section. This SITLA section has a private residence and a Boy Scout overnight camp. The 0.2 miles of trail on BLM would minimally-impact desert bighorn sheep because it is on the edge of the habitat area, and because it is near an area of development on SITLA lands.

The northern portion (approximately 1.3 miles) of the Gold Bar Rim Singletrack is excluded from this alternative. Migration habitat for desert bighorn sheep would not be compromised by the addition of another travel route that could fragment bighorn habitat since this one mile of route would not be added to the list of routes designated for mountain bike use.

#### **4.3.3.3 Socioeconomics**

The Moab and Grand County economy is largely dependent upon tourism. Mountain bikers are an unknown, but fairly large, component of the tourist economy. The provision of a new, “epic”, largely singletrack mountain bike trail would enhance economic opportunities for businesses that depend upon this sector. In addition, mountain bikers buy food and lodging locally; additional mountain bikers (or mountain bikers who stay an additional day to ride any one trail) provide an unknown but positive economic impact to Grand County. The failure to designate the entire Gold Bar Rim singletrack may deter some of these cyclists from undertaking the ride; this would be detrimental to economic returns from cyclists.

#### **4.3.3.2 Recreation**

Constructing and marking 6.2 miles of mountain bike singletrack trail would provide a positive impact to recreationists seeking bicycle opportunities in the Moab area. The trail would enable bicyclists to have a mainly downhill run from Highway 313 to Highway 279 adjacent to the Colorado River. This would provide a mountain biking opportunity that is largely unavailable on BLM lands in the Moab area.

Construction of the trail would provide a non-motorized alternative to the Gemini Bridges road and a portion of the Gold Bar Rim route. Motorized vehicles on the Gemini Bridges road travel at speeds that are not compatible with the slower speeds of bicyclists. Additionally, the dust raised by the fast moving vehicles is an impact upon bicyclists. The first three trail segments enable cyclists to avoid the Gemini Bridges road.

Although vehicles on the Gold Bar Rim route move at slower speeds, the route itself is highly eroded, with many ledges that are not rideable by bicyclists. The route proposed in Alternative C would allow cyclists to avoid approximately one-half of these ledges. On the northern portion of the route, cyclists would be forced to share the route with motorized vehicles.

The marking of the Magnificent Seven Trail would mean that additional mountain bikers would ride the Portal Trail to access Highway 279. This trail is primarily a hiking trail, although it is open to mountain bikers. The rock portions of the Portal Trail are suitable for bike riding; currently, the dirt portions of the Portal Trail are eroding and entrenching. The Magnificent Seven Trail could exacerbate this problem.

#### **4.3.3.1 Vegetation and Soils**

Constructing and marking 6.2 miles of mountain bike singletrack trail would impact soils and vegetation along the course of the trail. Given that 50% of the trail surface is slickrock, impacts to soils and vegetation would be lessened. However, a certain number of plants would be destroyed and soils could be compacted along the trail. The portion of the trail that would not be constructed under this alternative (northern portion of Gold Bar Singletrack) is entirely on slickrock. Thus, the impacts to soils and vegetation would not differ from the construction of 7.2 miles of singletrack in Alternative A.

#### **4.3.4 Mitigation Measures**

Proper construction techniques, such as rock armoring and lining, would be used to decrease the impacts on soils along the trail.

Vegetation would be avoided to the extent possible during trail construction.

Singletrack use may be disallowed on a limited portion of the new single track if a raptor nest is in use within a certain specified distance from the nest (time and distance varies by species). A portion of singletrack could be signed as closed for the duration of the nesting period and the route would be rerouted onto a nearby-designated road for the duration of the nesting.

The Portal Trail would be armored and repaired in order to withstand additional mountain bike use.

#### **4.4 Cumulative Impacts Analysis**

“Cumulative impacts” are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

##### **4.4.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area is the plateau upon which the Gemini Bridges and Gold Bar Rim roads travel. This area is dissected by many canyons which provide excellent habitat for desert bighorn sheep.

##### **4.4.2 Past and Present Actions**

###### **4.4.2.1 Fish and Wildlife**

One guzzler has been constructed north of the project area to allow desert bighorn sheep access to water.

###### **4.4.2.2 Socioeconomics**

Mountain biking is important sector of the economy in Grand County. Active marketing has taken place to attract mountain bikers to Grand County. Downhill runs are particularly attractive to mountain bikers; mountain bikers perceive that the Gemini Bridges road has been “lost” as a downhill mountain bike run due to the increase in motorized traffic on that road.

###### **4.4.2.3 Recreation**

The Gemini Bridges and Gold Bar Rim road corridors receive fairly heavy recreational traffic. In the latter half of the 1990’s, the majority of seasonal traffic on the Gemini Bridges road was bicycle traffic, as the road provided a mainly downhill run from Highway 313 to Highway 191. As the Gemini Bridges Road became more popular with motorized vehicles, bicyclists stopped using the road with such frequency.

###### **4.4.2.4 Vegetation and Soils**

There have been no specific actions in the area to protect vegetation and/or soils.

##### **4.4.3. Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario (RFAS)**

###### **4.4.3.1 Fish and Wildlife**

The use of the area by desert bighorn sheep is expected to grow.

#### **4.4.3.2 Socioeconomics**

The Moab economy is expected to become yet ever more dependent upon the tourist sector.

#### **4.4.3.3 Recreation**

Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users are expected to increase as numbers of people who wish to recreate in Moab continues to grow.

#### **4.4.3.4 Vegetation and Soils**

No known RFAS.

#### **4.4.4. Cumulative Impact Analysis**

##### **4.4.4.1 Fish and Wildlife**

Although the Gemini Bridges/Gold Bar area is heavily visited by recreationists, adding more bicyclists to the area could have a cumulative impact to the desert bighorn sheep due to disturbance by human presence. Increased use could impact the potential for growth of the desert bighorn sheep herd which frequents the area

##### **4.4.4.2 Socioeconomics**

An increase in the number of mountain-bike only singletrack opportunities could increase visitation to Moab by mountain bikers, enhancing the Moab economy.

##### **4.4.4.3 Recreation**

An increase in the number of mountain-bike only opportunities would provide a recreation asset in this sector of recreation use.

##### **4.4.4.4 Vegetation and Soils**

The loss of vegetation associated with the construction of the trail would not add appreciably to a denuding of the area.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The issue identification section of Chapter 1 identifies those issues analyzed in detail in Chapter 4. The Interdisciplinary (ID) Team Checklist provides the rationale for issues that were considered but not analyzed further. The issues were identified through the public and agency involvement process described in sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

### **5.2 Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted**

**Table 5-1 List of all Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted for Purposes of this EA**

| <b>Name</b>                         | <b>Purpose &amp; Authorities for Consultation or Coordination</b>                        | <b>Findings &amp; Conclusions</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Trail Mix, Grand County             | Proponent  | Adjusted initial proposal to avoid desert bighorn sheep habitat along Bull Canyon Rim      |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service      | Information on Consultation, under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531) | Concurred with "Not Likely to Adversely Affect" conclusion regarding MSO on August 9, 2010 |
| Utah Division of Wildlife Resources | Consult with UDWR as the agency with expertise on impacts on desert bighorn sheep.       | Justin Shannon, Wildlife Program Manager – Advisor on Bighorn Sheep impacts.               |

### **5.3 Summary of Public Participation**

During preparation of the EA, the public was notified of the proposed action by posting on the Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) on June 3, 2010. Respondents raised the issues of the economic return from bicycling, the need for singletrack biking opportunities in the Moab area, desert bighorn sheep habitat, fugitive dust control (State of Utah, Office of the Governor, Public Lands Policy Coordination), and externally proposed wilderness (Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance). The process used to involve the public included presentation of the proposal at four public meetings conducted by Trail Mix (in May, June, July and August, 2010).

A public comment period was offered on this Environmental Assessment from November 24 to December 29, 2010. An article announcing the availability of the EA and the public comment period was published in the Moab Times-Independent on November 25, 2010. A total of 90 comments were received and are analyzed below.

#### **5.3.1 Comment Analysis**

Comments were analyzed for both scope and content. Commenters are listed below, and comments are grouped by issue raised in the table in section 5.3.3.

#### **5.3.2 List of Commenters/Comment Number**

Diane Groff, Don Groff, Zak Hoh (1)  
 Malcolm Howe, Jonathan Sackheim (1, 2)  
 Maggie and Mike Wilson for Magpie Cycling Adventures, Chris Matson, Mont Lewis, Reed Abbot, Dave Hutton (3)  
 David Schipper, Page Clock, Paul Aieta, Wayne Sicz (1, 3)  
 Scott Morris (2, 3)  
 Daniel Goss (1, 3, 4)  
 Hillary Mead (1, 2, 3, 4)  
 Shannon Sweeten (3, 4, 5)  
 Whit Richardson, Eric Stapleton, Jason Addy, Nancy Lackey, Mason Jones (6)  
 Michael Barrow Thomas Jacobson, Sean Madsen, Kyle Cragin (1, 6)

Kristi Jensen, owner, Coyote Shuttle, Michael Beck-Gifford (1, 2, 6)  
 Wayne Hecker, Daniel Law (3, 6)  
 Brian Narajowski, Shane Kemp (1, 3, 6)  
 Josh Rhea, Black Diamond Equipment (1, 3, 7)  
 Ruth Dillon (1, 6, 7)  
 Sean Constantine (7)  
 Melissa Fletcher (1, 3, 8)  
 Matt McFee for Hermosa Tours, SRP holder (1, 2, 4, 7, 8)  
 Jeannette Kopell (9)  
 David Knowles, Moab business owner (1, 6, 9)  
 Deb Shank (10)  
 Grand County Road Department (11)  
 Douglas Fahlbusch (1, 3, 12)  
 Sam Shaffran (3, 13)  
 Marko Ross-Bryant (1, 2, 3, 4, 13)  
 Jesse Marshall (1, 2, 3, 13, 14)  
 Tracy Reed, owner, Chile Pepper Bike Shop (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 13, 14)  
 Evan Chute, Steven Lacey (1, 15)  
 Greg Lesoine, Fred Bretl (3, 15)  
 David Meldman (6, 15)  
 William Monroe, Jack Imbriani (1, 3, 15)  
 John Bailey (1, 3, 6, 15)  
 Patrick Stein, James Lackey (1, 6, 15)  
 Bill Simmons (2, 6, 15)  
 Jonathan Ormsby, Philip Screiber, Elizabeth Dee, (1, 2, 6, 15)  
 Doug Cutter (1, 2, 4, 6, 15)  
 Landon Monholland, owner Over the Edge Sports Bike Shop, (1, 2, 3, 6, 15)  
 Kent Robertson (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 15, 16)  
 Lance Canfield (2, 3, 4, 16)  
 Kit Nielsen (1, 2, 18)  
 Ron Thompson (1, 3, 18)  
 Mike DeBernardo (1, 2, 3, 17, 18)  
 Sam Feldman-Peabody (19)  
 Aaron Beck (1, 19)  
 International Mountain Bicycling Association (1, 2, 19)  
 David Osborne (1, 3, 19)  
 Christine French, Jim Kanter, Linda Lee (1, 15, 19)  
 Jason Vogel (1, 2, 3, 19)  
 David Burger (1, 6, 15, 19)  
 Bruce Condi (1, 13, 18, 19)  
 Brandon Eifrid, Dan Monaco (1, 6, 15, 19)  
 Kirsten Peterson, Matt Hebbard, owners, Rim Tours (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 15, 19)  
 Angela Houghton, owner, Moab Mountain Bike Instruction (1, 3, 7, 17, 19)  
 Fred Wilkinson, local business owner (1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 17, 18, 19)  
 James Crum (1, 2, 3, 7, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19)  
 Chris Muhr, COPMOBA President (1, 4, 15, 20)



Carla Hukee (1, 3, 24)  
Jordan Hukee-Orbea (1, 3, 4, 18, 24)  
Flagstaff Biking Organization (1, 2, 3, 6, 13, 15, 19, 25, 26)  
Steve Langelo (1, 4, 15, 18, 20, 27)  
Tom Dillon (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 18, 28)  
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (21, 22, 29, 30, 31)

### 5.3.3 Response to Public Comment:

| #  | Comment/Number of times mentioned   | BLM Response   |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | Mountain biking opportunities create an economic benefit for the Grand County economy. (63)   | The economic impacts of mountain biking on the Moab economy have been acknowledged in the EA.  |
| 2  | Bike riding on a road is not enjoyable for cyclists because of issues such as exhaust and dust. (26)  | The issue of dust and the general unpleasantness of riding on a road have been discussed in the EA.  |
| 3  | Alternative A is preferable as it meets the need. (44)  | The BLM acknowledges the desire for Alternative A by the mountain bike community.  |
| 4  | Bikes need to be removed from the road for safety reasons. (12)   | The safety issue of bikes sharing a road with motorized vehicles is discussed in the EA.   |
| 5  | The route removed by Alternative C should only be closed IF it has a negative impact on bighorn sheep. (1)  | The BLM has considered this suggestion in the crafting of Alternative A, as it is a monitoring measure to be applied should Alternative A be chosen. |
| 6  | Moab needs more singletrack biking opportunities. (38)  | The need for more singletrack is part of the purpose and need for the proposed action.   |
| 7  | Moab needs more epic (long, mainly downhill) mountain bike riding experiences. (7)  | The need for an "epic" ride is part of the purpose and need for the proposed action.   |
| 8  | The proposed trail provides a challenging trail experience that is quite scarce. (3)  | The idea of "challenge" has been added to the purpose and need for the proposed action.  |
| 9  | The trail is a chance to get into the outdoors and to appreciate the environment. (2)   | The idea of getting into the outdoors has been added to the purpose and need for the proposed action.  |
| 10 | An indirect effect of the marking of the Magnificent Seven trail would be increased bike use on the Portal trail; this trail should be armored to withstand additional use.(1)  | The issue has been added to the indirect impacts section. Mitigation measures have been added that would require the armoring of the Portal Trail.   |
| 11 | The EA states that mineral development in the area is "minimal". This is a misrepresentation. In addition, the EA implies that the initial use of the road was by bicycle. This route was used by stockmen, hunters, miners and jeepers prior to bikes. (1) | The text has been corrected to better represent the history of the area.   |
| 12 | Current uses of a non-wilderness area,  | The potential impacts to bighorn sheep   |

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|    | including oil and gas and motorized sports have more impact on bighorn than can the addition of a bike trail. (1)  | are discussed in the EA.   |
| 13 | The upper portion of the Gold Bar Singletrack has been in existence for over 20 years, yet the bighorn herd has expanded in face of that use. The upper portion will cause no further fragmentation of habitat, and this was acknowledged by the BLM biologist. Several commentors mentioned that they have abided by the illegality of the trail and are anxious to have it made legal. (9) | The BLM acknowledges the prior existence of the trail. The impacts on bighorn are detailed in the EA. The BLM thanks those users who have stayed off the trail during the time it was illegal. For the record, prior to the signing of the RMP on October 31, 2008, travel was limited to "existing" routes and travel on this route was legal. On that date, travel was limited to "designated" routes; since the route was not designated in the RMP, it was not legal from October 31, 2008 onward. |
| 14 | The Gold Bar Jeep route is an unacceptable alternative to the Gold Bar singletrack due to its extreme erosion. (2)   | The unsuitability of the Gold Bar Rim road for bicycles has been added to the EA.  |
| 15 | Adding another route will disperse recreation use in the area and decrease the feeling of crowding. This will help bighorn. (30)   | The crowding of recreationists onto one route is discussed in the EA.  |
| 16 | The USFWS has stated that the proposal will not "adversely affect" species. This means that the bighorn sheep will not be affected. (3)  | The USFWS opinion only concerned Threatened and Endangered Species (in this area, the Mexican spotted owl). Bighorn sheep are not threatened or endangered, and are thus not covered by the USFWS's opinion.   |
| 17 | The four routes can be combined to provide many options for cyclists. (3)  | The BLM acknowledges this variety and flexibility in the EA.   |
| 18 | The proposed trail provides wonderful scenic views of a stunning area. (9)   | The BLM acknowledges the scenic value of the area in the purpose and need section.   |
| 19 | The trail as originally proposed was altered substantially to accommodate bighorn sheep habitat. (18)  | The BLM appreciates the proponent's willingness to adjust the route to accommodate the sheep.  |
| 20 | More trails lead to health benefits. (3)   | The BLM acknowledges the health benefits of cycling.   |
| 21 | The Gold Bar Singletrack trail is within the land proposed for wilderness under America's Red rock Wilderness Act. BLM has stated that the Gold Bar Unit has wilderness characteristics. SUWA requests that Gold Bar Singletrack be removed. (1)<br>Note: scoping comment  | <p>The EA analyzes the non-designation of that portion of the trail in the No Action alternative. The Bull Run, Little Canyon and Arth's Corner sections of trail could be approved without approval of Gold Bar Singletrack.</p> <p>The BLM did not find the portion of the Gold Bar unit on which the Gold Bar Singletrack is located to have wilderness characteristics. The portion of the unit in question is separated from the remainder</p>  |

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|    |   | of the unit by the Gold Bar Jeep route and was thus found not to have wilderness characteristics. This is discussed in the EA.  |
| 22 | The Gold Bar Singletrack trail would impact desert bighorn sheep. (1) Note: scoping comment   | The impacts to the sheep are acknowledged; Alternative C was crafted to address this impact.  |
| 23 | The project must commit to following Utah Air Quality Rules regarding construction activities and the need to minimize fugitive dust. (1) Note: scoping comment   | The proponent has agreed, as part of the Proposed Action, to follow the Utah Air Quality rules.   |
| 24 | Providing new singletrack bike trails, especially challenging routes, prevents illegal trail building. (2)  | Although an interesting perspective, the BLM never condones illegal trail building.   |
| 25 | The RMP meant lost cross country travel opportunities for cyclists. This proposal would help compensate for that loss. (1)  | The BLM recognizes that many cyclists support the proposal.   |
| 26 | The proposed trail is in an area which lack Wilderness Characteristics; we agree with the BLM's assessment. (1)   | The 1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory found the area in question to lack wilderness characteristics; these inventory findings were confirmed in the 2008 Moab RMP.   |
| 27 | Mountain biking is an environmentally friendly sport and should be encouraged.  | The BLM appreciates the commentor's perspective.  |
| 28 | Research done on other bighorn sheep herds shows that bikers are less impacting than hikers on these herds. (1)   | The BLM acknowledges this research; however, the number of mountain bikers is likely to exceed the number of hikers that would visit the migration corridor should the trail be approved.   |
| 29 | The BLM must comply with Secretarial Order 3310. Alternatives A and C are both located in an area that is proposed for wilderness designation by SUWA. The BLM must comply with Sec. Order 3310 and the BLM's guidance to be finalized in BLM Manual 6300-2 before the Moab Field Office can issue a decision for this project. (1) | The area in question was found to lack wilderness characteristics in the 1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory, which was conducted under the Wilderness Handbook that was in effect at that time. This lack of wilderness characteristics was confirmed in the findings in the 2008 Moab RMP (see Map15, 2008 Moab RMP). Subsequent field trips during the preparation of this document reconfirmed that the area in question lacks wilderness characteristics. |
| 30 | The BLM must follow its land use plan, which includes a no surface occupancy stipulation for oil and gas leasing and precludes other surface disturbing activities within 101, 897 acres of lambing, rutting and migration habitat. Alternative A is does not conform to this RMP decision. (1)                                     | The BLM crafted Alternative C to address this issue. The question is whether or not allowing bikes to ride on slickrock is "surface disturbing". The Moab RMP defines "surface disturbing activities" in Appendix A. "Road construction" is defined as surface disturbing. The basic question is whether or not designation of the trail  |

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|    |   | would be "surface disturbing".   |
| 31 | The Moab RMP designated a Hiking Focus Area in the Goldbar area. A portion of the proposed trail is proposed to cut directly through this focus area. (1) | A GIS analysis of the proposed trail shows that the trail does not enter the Hiking Focus area. The trail does not go to the south of the Gold Bar Rim/Golden Spike Jeep Route, which is the boundary of the Goldbar Hiking Focus Area. There could be minor data overlaps due to GPS variations, as the trail and the road were gps'ed at different times and with different units; however, the mountain bike trail would not enter the Hiking Focus Area as it would not cross the Gold Bar Rim jeep trail. |

## 5.4 List of Preparers

**Table 5.4 List of BLM Preparers**

| Name             | Title                       | Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document   |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Katie Stevens    | Outdoor Recreation Planner  | Technical coordination and quality control, Recreation, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Visual Resources |
| Anne Marie Aubry | Hydrologist                 | Air Quality, Floodplains, Soils, Water Resources, Wetlands/Riparian Zones   |
| Bill Stevens     | Outdoor Recreation Planner  | BLM Natural Area, Socioeconomics, Wilderness/WSA  |
| Leigh Grench     | Archaeologist               | Cultural Resources, Native American Concerns  |
| Ben Kniola       | Natural Resource Specialist | Environmental Justice, Wastes   |
| Pam Riddle       | Wildlife Biologist          | Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species, Migratory Birds, Utah BLM Sensitive Species, Fish and Wildlife                        |
| Jordan Davis     | Range Conservationist       | Invasive Species  |
| Dave Williams    | Range Conservationist       | Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species, Livestock Grazing, Vegetation, Woodlands   |

## APPENDICES:

### APPENDIX A: Interdisciplinary Team Checklist

### APPENDIX B: Maps

#### Map of Alternative A

#### Map of Alternative C



## INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST

**Project Title:** Magnificent Seven Mountain Bike Trail

**NEPA Log Number:** DOI BLM-Y-010-2010-0186 EA

**File/Serial Number:**

**Project Leader:** Katie Stevens

**DETERMINATION OF STAFF:** *(Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)*

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section D of the DNA form. The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.

The following elements are not present in the Moab Field Office and have been removed from the checklist:  
Farmlands (Prime or Unique), Wild Horses and Burros.

| Determina-<br>tion | Resource   | Rationale for Determination*  | Specialist      | Date     |
|--------------------|--|---|-----------------|----------|
| NI                 | Air Quality<br>Greenhouse Gas<br>Emissions           |   | Ann Marie Aubry | 6/7/10   |
| NI                 | Floodplains  |   | Ann Marie Aubry | 6/7/10   |
| PI                 | Soils  | Trail design and construction may be needed on<br>steeper slopes to reduce soil erosion | Ann Marie Aubry | 6/7/10   |
| NI                 | Water Resources/Quality<br>(drinking/surface/ground) |   | Ann Marie Aubry | 6/7/10   |
| NP                 | Wetlands/Riparian Zones                              |   | Ann Marie Aubry | 6/7/10   |
| NP                 | Areas of Critical<br>Environmental Concern           | See Map 21, 2008 Moab RMP   | Katie Stevens   | 6/7/10   |
| PI                 | Recreation   | Would provide recreation benefit  | Katie Stevens   | 6/7/10   |
| NP                 | Wild and Scenic Rivers                               | See Map 22, 2008 Moab RMP   | Katie Stevens   | 6/7/10   |
| NI                 | Visual Resources                                     | Bicycle traffic is a temporary visual impact.   | Katie Stevens   | 6/7/10   |
| NP                 | BLM Natural Areas                                    | See Map 16, 2008 Moab RMP   | Bill Stevens    | 6/7/10   |
| PI                 | Socio-Economics                                      | Would produce positive impact in local economy  | Bill Stevens    | 6/7/10   |
| NP                 | Wilderness/WSA                                       | See Map 23, 2008 Moab RMP   | Bill Stevens    | 6/7/10   |
| NP                 | Lands With Wilderness<br>Characteristics             | See Map 15, 2008 Moab RMP   | Bill Stevens    | 6/7/10   |
| NI                 | Cultural Resources                                   | U-10-BL-0745 bs   | Leigh Grench    | 11/30/10 |
| NI                 | Native American<br>Religious Concerns                |   | Leigh Grench    | 11/30/10 |
| NP                 | Environmental Justice                                |   | Ben Kniola      | 6/7/10   |







| Determination | Resource  | Rationale for Determination*   | Specialist    | Date   |
|---------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| NP            | Wastes<br>(hazardous or solid)                            |                                | Ben Kniola    | 6/7/10 |
| PI            | Threatened, Endangered<br>or Candidate Animal<br>Species  | MSO habitat                    | Pamela Riddle | 6/7/10 |
| NI            | Migratory Birds   |                                | Pamela Riddle | 6/7/10 |
| NI            | Utah BLM Sensitive<br>Species                             |                                | Pamela Riddle | 6/7/10 |
| PI            | Fish and Wildlife<br>Excluding USFW<br>Designated Species | Bighorn habitat                | Pamela Riddle | 6/7/10 |
| NP            | Threatened, Endangered<br>or Candidate Plant<br>Species   |                                | Dave Williams | 6/7/10 |
| PI            | Livestock Grazing   | Existing grazing permit        | Dave Williams | 6/7/10 |
| NI            | Invasive Species/Noxious<br>Weeds                         |                                | Jordan Davis  | 6/7/10 |
| PI            | Vegetation Excluding<br>USFW Designated<br>Species        | Could be impacts to vegetation | Dave Williams | 6/7/10 |
| NI            | Woodland / Forestry                                       |                                | Jordan Davis  | 6/7/10 |

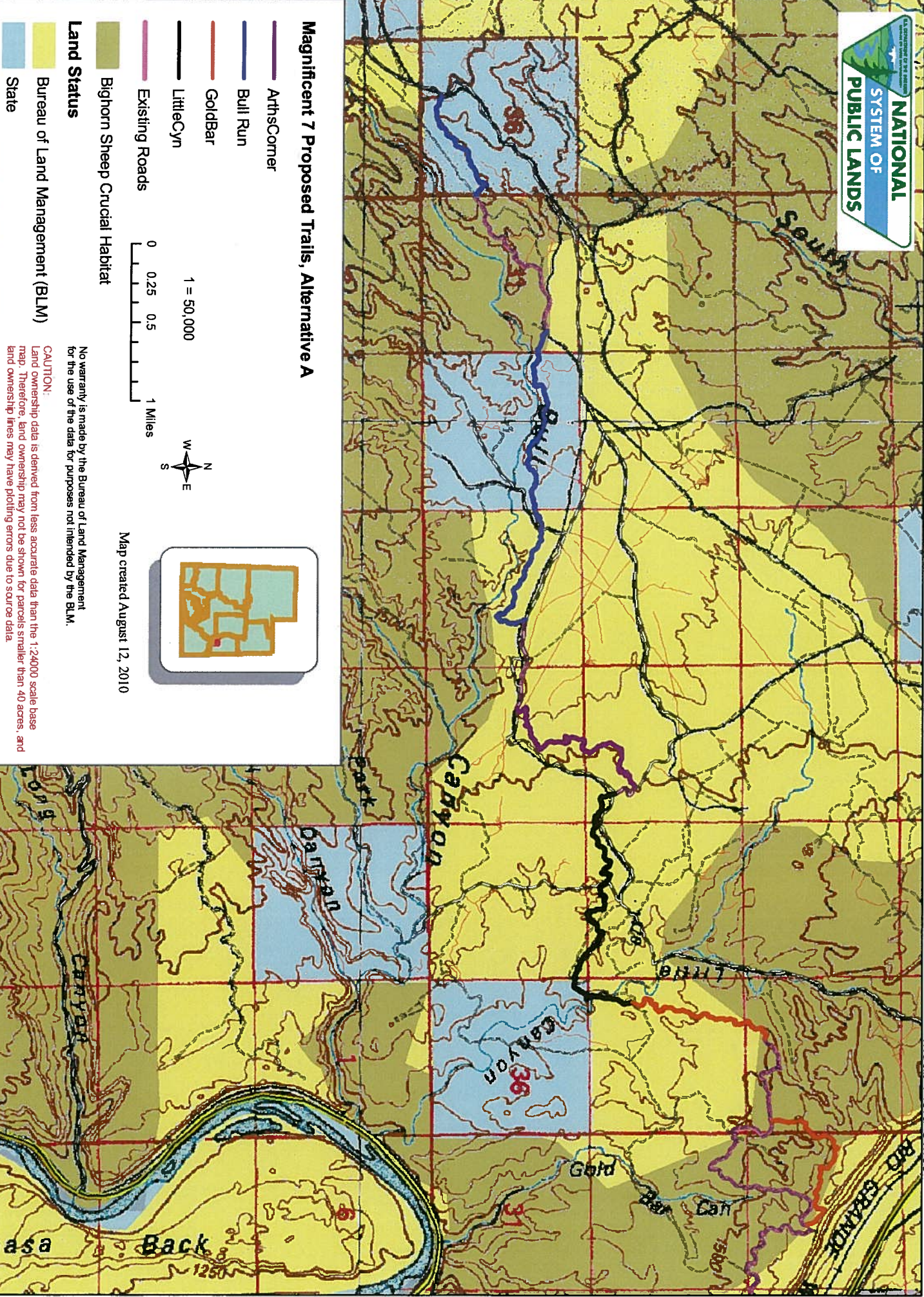
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**FINAL REVIEW:**

| Reviewer Title            | Signature   | Date    | Comments |
|---------------------------|---|---------|----------|
| Environmental Coordinator |  | 1/31/11 |          |
| Authorized Officer        |  | 2/1/11  |          |







**Magnificent 7 Proposed Trails, Alternative A**

- ArthoComer
- Bull Run
- GoldBar
- LittleCyn
- Existing Roads
- Bighorn Sheep Crucial Habitat
- Land Status
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- State

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Map created August 12, 2010

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.

**CAUTION:**  
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and land ownership lines may have plotting errors due to source data.







